

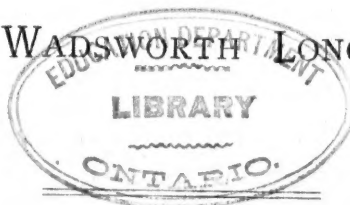
THE
NEW POEMS

OF

JEAN INGELow.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.



TORONTO :
BELFORD BROTHERS.
1876.

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THE SHEPHERD LADY
AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

JEAN INGELow.

TORONTO
DUDLEY & BURNS, PRINTERS,
COLBORNE ST.

THE SHEPHERD LADY.

I.

Who pipes upon the long green hill,
Where meadow grass is deep ?
The white lamb bleats but followeth on—
Follow the clean white sheep.
The dear white lady in yon high tower,
She harkeneth in her sleep.

All in long grass the piper stands,
Goodly and grave is he ;
Outside the tower, at dawn of day,
The notes of his pipe ring free.
A thought from his heart doth reach to hers :
“ Come down, O lady ! to me.”

The Shepherd Lady.

She lifts her head, she dons her gown :
Ah ! the lady is fair ;
She ties the girdle on her waist,
And binds her flaxen hair,
And down she stealeth, down and down,
Down the turret stair.

Behold him ! With the flock he wons
Along yon grassy lea.
“ My shepherd lord, my shepherd love,
What wilt thou, then, with me ?
My heart is gone out of my breast
And followeth on to thee.”

II.

“ The white lambs feed in tender grass :
With them and thee to bide,
How good it were,” she saith at noon ;
“ Albeit the meads are wide.
Oh ! well is me,” she saith when day
Draws on to eventide.

Hark ! hark ! the shepherd's voice. Oh, sweet !

Her tears drop down like rain.

"Take now this crook, my chosen, my fere,

And tend the flock full fain ;

Feed them, O lady, and lose not one,

Till I shall come again."

Right soft her speech : " My will is thine,

And my reward thy grace ! "

Gone are his footsteps over the hill,

Withdrawn his goodly face ;

The mournful dusk begins to gather,

The daylight wanes apace.

III.

On sunny slopes, ah ! long the lady

Feedeth her flock at noon ;

She leads it down to drink at eve

Where the small rivulets croon.

All night her locks are wet with dew,

Her eyes outwatch the moon.

Beyond the hills her voice is heard,
She sings when light doth wane ;
“ My longing heart is full of love,
Nor shall my watch be vain.
My shepherd lord, I see him not,
But he will come again.”



ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

And can this be my own world ?
'Tis all gold and snow,
Save where scarlet waves are hurled
Down yon gulf below ?
'Tis thy world, 'tis my world,
City mead, and shore,
For he that hath his own world
Hath many worlds more.

LOVE'S THREAD OF GOLD.

In the night she told a story,
In the night and all night through,
While the moon was in her glory,
And the branches dropped with dew.
'Twas my life she told, and round it
Rose the years as from a deep ;
In the world's great heart she found it,
Cradled like a child asleep.
In the night I saw her weaving
By the misty moonbeam cold,
All the web her shuttle cleaving
With a sacred thread of gold,
Ah ! she wept me tears of sorrow,
Lulling tears so mystic sweet ;
Then she wove my last to-morrow,
And her web lay at my feet.

Of my life she made the story :

I must weep—so soon 'twas told !

But your name did lend it glory,

And your love its thread of gold !



FAILURE.

We are much bound to them that do succeed
But, in a more pathetic sense, are bound
To such as fail. They all our loss expound ;
They comfort us for work that will not speed,
And life—itself a failure.

Ay, his deed,
Sweetest in story, who the dusk profound
Of Hades flooded with entrancing sound,
Music's own tears, was failure. Doth it read
Therefore the worse ? Ah, no ! so much to dare,
He fronts the regnant Darkness on its throne.—
So much to do : impetuous even there,
He pours out love's disconsolate sweet moan.—
He wins ; but few for that his deed recall :
Its power is in the look which costs him all.

ONE MORNING, OH ! SO EARLY.

One morning, oh ! so early, my beloved, my beloved,
All the birds were singing blithely, as if never they would
cease ;

'Twas a thrush sang in my garden, " Hear the story, hear
the story !"

And the lark sang, " Give us glory !"

And the dove said, " Give us peace !"

Then I listened, oh ! so early, my beloved, my beloved,
To that murmur from the woodland of the dove, my dear,
the dove ;

When the nightingale came after, " Give us fame to sweeten
duty !"

When the wren sang, " Give us beauty !"

She made answer, " Give us love !"

Sweet is spring, and sweet the morning, my belovèd, my
belovèd ;
Now for us doth spring, doth morning, wait upon the year's
increase,
And my prayer goes up, " Oh, give us, crowned in youth
with marriage glory,
Give for all our life's dear story,
Give us love, and give us peace ! "



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belovèd, my
upon the year's
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THE DAYS WITHOUT ALLOY.

When I sit on market days amid the comers and the goers.

Oh ! full oft I have a vision of the days without alloy,
And a ship comes up the river with a jolly gang of towers,
And a "pull'e haul'e, pull'e haul'e, yoy ! heave, hoy !"

There is busy talk around me, all about mine ears it hum-
meth,

But the wooden wharves I look on, and a dancing, heav-
ing buoy,
For 'tis tidetime in the river, and she cometh—oh, she
cometh !

With a "pull'e haul'e, pull'e haul'e, yoy ! heave, hoy !"

Then I hear the water washing, never golden waves were
brighter,

And I hear the capstan creaking—'tis a sound that can-
not cloy.

Bring her to, to ship her lading, brig or schooner, sloop or
lighter,

With a "pull'e haul'e, pull'e haul'e, yoy ! heave, hoy !"

"Will ye step aboard, my dearest ? for the high seas lie
before us."

So I sailed with him the river in those days without alloy ;
Sailed afar, but when, I wonder, shall a sweeter sound float
o'er us

Than yon "pull'e haul'e, pull'e haul'e, yoy ! heave, hoy !"



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heave, hoy ! ”

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ys without alloy ;
eter sound float

! heave, hoy ! ”

THE LEAVES OF LIGN ALOES.

Drop, drop from the leaves of lign aloes,
O honey-dew ! drop from the tree.
Float up through your clear river shallows,
White lilies, beloved of the bee.

Let the people, O Queen ! say, and bless thee,
Her bounty drops soft as the dew,
And spotless in honor confess thee,
As lilies are spotless in hue.

On the roof stands yon white stork awaking,
His feathers flush rosy the while,
For, lo ! from the blushing east breaking,
The sun sheds the bloom of his smile.

Let them boast of thy word, "It is certain ;
We doubt it no more," let them say,
"Than to-morrow that night's dusky curtain
Shall roll back its folds for the day."



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ON THE ROCKS BY ABERDEEN.

On the rocks by Aberdeen,
Where the whisin' wave had been,
As I wandered and at e'en
 Was eerie ;
There I saw thee sailing west,
And I ran with joy opprest —
Ay, and took out all my best,
 My dearie.

Then I busked mysel' wi' speed,
And the neighbors cried "What need ?
'Tis a lass in any weed
 Aye bonny !"
Now my heart, my heart is sair :
What's the good, though I be fair,
For thou'lt never see me mair,
 Man Johnnie !

FEATHERS AND MOSS.

The marten flew to the finch's nest,
Feathers and moss, and a wisp of hay ;
"The arrow it sped to thy brown mate's breast ;
Low in the broom is thy mate to-day."

"Liest thou low, love ? low in the broom ?
Feathers and moss, and a wisp of hay,
Warm the white eggs till I learn his doom."
She beateth her wings, and away, away.

"Ah, my sweet singer, thy days are told
(Feathers and moss, and a wisp of hay) !
Thine eyes are dim, and the eggs grow cold,
O mournful morrow ! O dark to-day !"

The finch flew back to her cold, cold nest,
Feathers and moss, and a wisp of hay,
Mine is the trouble that rent her breast,
And home is silent, and love is clay.

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CHILDHOOD.

Sweet is childhood—childhood's over,

Kiss and part.

Sweet is youth ; but youth's a rover—

So's my heart.

Sweet is rest ; but by all showing

Toil is nigh.

We must go. Alas ! the going,

Say "good-bye."

THE GYPSY'S SELLING SONG.

My good man—he's an old, old man,
And my good man got a fall,
To buy me a bargain so fast he ran
When he heard the gypsies call :
 " Buy, buy brushes,
 Baskets wrought o' rushes.
 Buy them, buy them, take them, try them,
 Buy, dames all."

My old man, he has money and land,
And a young, young wife am I.
Let him put the penny in my white hand
When he hears the gypsies cry :
 " Buy, buy laces,
 Veils to screen your faces.
 Buy them, buy them, take and try them.
 Buy, maids, buy."

SONG.

MY FAIR LADY.

My fair lady's a dear, dear lady—

I walked by her side to woo.

In a garden alley, so sweet and shady,

She answered, "I love not you,

John, John Brady,"

Quoth my dear lady,

"Pray now, pray now, go your way now,

Do, John, do!"

Yet my fair lady's my own, own lady,

For I passed another day ;

While making her moan, she sat all alone,

And thus and thus did she say :

"John, John Brady,"

Quoth my dear lady,

"Do now, do now, once more woo now,

Pray, John, pray!"

SLEEP AND TIME.

“Wake, baillie, wake ! the crafts are out ;
Wake !” said the knight, “be quick !
For high street, bye street, over the town
They fight with poker and stick.”
Said the squire, “A fight so fell was ne’er
In all thy bailliewick.”
What said the old clock in the tower ?
“Tick, tick, tick !”

“Wake, daughter, wake ! the hour draws on ;
Wake !” quoth the dame, “be quick !
The meats are set, the guests are coming,
The fiddler waxing his stick.”
She said, “The bridegroom waiting and waiting
To see thy face is sick.”
What said the new clock in her bower ?
“Tick, tick, tick !”

MASTER, QUOTH THE AULD HOUND.

" Master," quoth the auld hound,

" Where will ye go ?"

" Over moss, over muir,

To court my new jo."

" Master, though the night be merk,

I'se follow through the snow.

" Court her, master, court her,

So shall ye do weel ;

But and ben she'll guide the house,

I'se get milk and meal.

Ye'se get liltin' while she sits

With her rock and reel."

" For, oh ! she has a sweet tongue,

And een that look down,

A gold girdle for her waist,

And a purple gown.

She has a good word forbye

Fra a' folk in the town."

LIKE A LAVEROCK IN THE LIFT.

It's we two, it's we two, it's we two for aye,
All the world and we two, and Heaven be our stay,
Like a laverock in the lift, sing, O bonny bride !
All the world was Adam once, with Eve by his side.

What's the world, my lass, my love !—what can it do ?
I am thine, and thou art mine ; life is sweet and new.
If the world have missed the mark, let it stand by,
For we two have gotten leave, and once more we'll try.

Like a laverock in the lift, sing, O bonny bride !
It's we two, it's we two, happy side by side.
Take a kiss from me thy man ; now the song begins :
“ All is made afresh for us, and the brave heart wins.”

When the darker days come, and no sun will shine,
Thou shalt dry my tears, lass, and I'll dry thine.
It's we two, it's we two, while the world's away,
Sitting by the golden sheaves on our wedding-day.

LIFT.

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AT ONE AGAIN.

AT ONE AGAIN.

I. NOONDAY.

Two angry men—in heat they sever,
And one goes home by a harvest field :—
“ Hope’s nought,” quoth he, “ and vain endeavour ;
“ I said and say it, I will not yield !
“ As for this wrong, no art can mend it,
The bond is shiver’d that held us twain :
Old friends we be, but law must end it,
Whether for loss or whether for gain.
“ Yon stream is small—full slow its wending ;
But winning is sweet, but right is fine ;
And shoal of trout, or willowy bending—
Though Law be costly—I’ll prove them mine.

“ His strawberry cow slipped loose her tether,
And trod the best of my barley down ;
His little lasses at play together
Pluck'd the poppies my boys had grown.

“ What then ?—Why nought ! *She* lack'd of reason :
And *they*—my little ones match them well :—
But *this*—Nay all things have their season,
And 'tis my season to curb and quell.”



II. SUNSET.

So saith he, when noontide fervours flout him,
So thinks, when the West is amber and red,
When he smells the hop-vines sweet about him,
And the clouds are rosy overhead.

While slender and tall the hop-poles going
Straight to the West in their leafy lines,
Portion it out into chambers, glowing,
And bask in red day as the sun declines.

Between the leaves in his latticed arbour
He sees the sky, as they flutter and turn,
While moor'd like boats in a golden harbour
The fleets of feathery cloudlets burn.

Withdrawn in shadow, he thinketh over
Harsh thoughts, the fruit-laden trees among,
Till pheasants call their young to cover,
And cushats coo them a nursery song.

And flocks of ducks forsake their sedges,
 Wending home to the wide barn-door,
And loaded wains between the hedges
 Slowly creep to his threshing floor—

Slowly creep. And his tired senses,
 Float him over the magic stream,
To a world where Fancy recompenses
 Vengeful thoughts, with a troubled dream !



III. THE DREAM.

What's this ? a wood—What's that ? one calleth,
Calleth and cryeth in mortal dread—
He hears men strive—then somewhat falleth !—
“ Help me, neighbour—I'm hard bestead.”

The dream is strong—the voice he knoweth—
But when he would run, his feet are fast,
And death lies beyond, and no man goeth
To help, and he says the time is past.

His feet are held, and he shakes all over,—
Nay—they are free—he has found the place—
Green boughs are gather'd—what is't they cover ?—
“ I pray you, look on the dead man's face ;

You that stand by,” he saith, and cowers—
“ Man, or Angel, to guard the dead
With shadowy spear, and a brow that lowers,
And wing-points reared in the gloom o'erhead.—

I dare not look. He wronged me never,
Men say we differ'd ; they speak amiss :
This man and I were neighbours ever—
I would have ventured my life for his.

But fast my feet were—fast with tangles—
Aye ! words—but they were not sharp, I trow,
Though parish feuds and vestry wrangles—
O pitiful sight—I see thee now !—

If we fell out, 'twas but foul weather,
After long shining ! O bitter cup,—
• What—dead ?—why, man, we play'd together—
Art dead—ere a friend can make it up ?”



IV. THE WAKING.

Over his head the chafer hummeth,
Under his feet the daisies bend :
Waken, man ! the enemy cometh,
Thy neighbour, counted so long a friend.

He cannot waken—and firm, and steady,
The enemy comes with lowering brow ;
He looks for war, his heart is ready,
His thoughts are bitter—he will not bow.

He fronts the seat,—the dream is flinging
A spell that his footsteps may not break,—
But one in the garden of hops is singing—
The dreamer hears it, and starts awake.

V. A SONG.

Walking apart, she thinks none listen ;
And now she carols, and now she stops ;
And the evening star begins to glisten
Atween the lines of blossoming hops.

Sweetest Mercy, your mother taught you
All uses and cares that to maids belong ;
Apt scholar to read and to sew she taught you—
She did not teach you that tender song—

“The lady sang in her charmèd bower,
Sheltered and safe under roses blown—
*‘ Storm cannot touch me, hail, nor shower,
Where ail alone I sit, all alone.*

*My bower ! The fair Fay twined it round me ;
Care nor trouble can pierce it through ;
But once a sigh from the warm world found me
Between two leaves that were bent with dew.*

*And day to night, and night to morrow,
Though soft as slumber the long hours wore
I looked for my dower of love, of sorrow—
Is there no more—no more—no more?*

Give her the sun-sweet light, and duly
To walk in shadow, nor chide her part ;
Give her the rose, and truly, truly—
To wear its thorn with a patient heart.—

Misty as dreams the moonbeam lyeth
Chequered and faint on her charmèd floor ;
The lady singeth, the lady sigheth—
'Is there no more—no more—no more!'



VI. THE LOVERS.

A crash of boughs !—one through them breaking !

Mercy is startled, and fain would fly,
But e'en as she turns, her steps o'ertaking,
He pleads with her—" Mercy, it is but I !"

" Mercy !" he touches her hand unbidden—

" The air is balmy, I pray you stay—
Mercy ?" Her downcast eyes are hidden,
And never a word she has to say.

Till closer drawn, her prison'd fingers

He takes to his lips with a yearning strong ;
And she murmurs low, that late she lingers,
Her mother will want her, and think her long.

" Good mother is she, then honour duly

The lightest wish in her heart that stirs ;
But there is a bond yet dearer truly,
And there is a love that passeth hers.

Mercy, Mercy !" Her heart attendeth—
Love's birthday blush on her brow lies sweet ;
She turns her face when his own he bendeth,
And the lips of the youth and the maiden meet.



—
lies sweet ;
endeth,
maiden meet.



VII. THE FATHERS.

Move through the bowering hops, O lovers,—
Wander down to the golden West,—
But two stand mute in the shade that covers
Your love and youth from their souls opprest.

A little shame on their spirits stealing,—
A little pride that is loth to sue,—
A little struggle with soften'd feeling,—
And a world of fatherly care for you.

One says : " To this same running water,
May be, Neighbour, your claim is best."
And one—" Your son has kissed my daughter :
Let the matters between us—rest."

I CALL the old time back : I bring my lay
In tender memory of the summer day
When, where our native river lapsed away,

We dreamed it over, while the thrushes made
Songs of their own, and the great pine trees laid
On warm noonlights the masses of their shade.

And *she* was with us, living o'er again
Her life in ours, despite of years and pain,—
The Autumn's brightness after latter rain.

Beautiful in her holy peace as one
Who stands, at evening, when the work is done,
Glorified in the setting of the sun !

Her memory makes our common landscape seem
Fairer than any of which painters dream ;
Lights the brown hills and sings in every stream ;

For she whose speech was always truth's pure gold
Heard, not unpleased, its simple legends told,
And loved with us the beautiful and old.

MABEL MARTIN.
A HARVEST IDYL.

BY
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

PART I.

THE RIVER VALLEY.

MABEL MARTIN.

Across the level tableland,
A grassy, rarely trodden way,
With thinnest skirt of birchen spray

And stunted growth of cedar, leads
To where you see the dull plain fall
Sheer off, steep-slanted, ploughed by all

The seasons rainfalls. On its brink
The over-leaning harebells swing,
With roots half bare the pine-trees cling

And, through the shadow looking west,
You see the wavering river flow
Along a vale, that far below

Holds to the sun, the sheltering hills,
And glimmering water-line between,
Broad fields of corn and meadows green,

And fruit-bent orchards grouped around
The low brown roofs and painted eaves,
And chimney-tops half hid in leaves.

No warmer valley hides behind
Yon wind-scourged sand-dunes, cold and bleak ;
No fairer river comes to seek

The wave-sung welcome of the sea,
Or mark the northmost border line
Of sun-loved growths of nut and vine.

Here, ground-fast in their native fields,
Untempted by the city's gain,
The quiet farmer folk remain

Who bear the pleasant name of Friends,
And keep their fathers' gentle ways
And simple speech of Bible days ;

In whose neat homesteads woman holds
With modest ease her equal place,
And wears upon her tranquil face

The look of one who, merging not
Her self-hood in another's will,
Is love's and duty's handmaid still.

Pass with me down the path that winds
Through birches to the open land,
Where, close upon the river strand

You mark a cellar, vine o'errun,
Above whose wall of loosened stones
The sumach lifts its reddening cones,

And the black nightshade's berries shine,
And broad, unsightly burdocks fold
The household ruin, century-old.

Here, in the dim colonial time
Of sterner lives and gloomier faith,
A woman lived, tradition saith,

Who wrought her neighbors foul annoy,
And witched and plagued the country-side,
Till at the hangman's hand she died.

Sit with me while the westering day
Falls slantwise down the quiet vale,
And, haply, ere yon loitering sail,

That rounds the upper headland, falls
Below Deer Island's pines, or sees
Behind it Hawkswood's belt of trees

Rise black against the sinking sun,
My idyl of its days of old,
The valley's legend shall be told.



PART II.

THE HUSKING.

It was the pleasant harvest-time,
When cellar-bins are closely stowed,
And garrets bend beneath their load,

And the old swallow-haunted barns,—
Brown-gabled, long, and full of seams
Through which the moted sunlight streams,

And winds blow freshly in, to shake
The red plumes of the roosted cocks,
And the loose hay-mow's scented locks,—

Are filled with summer's ripened stores,
Its odorous grass and barley sheaves,
From their low scaffolds to their eaves.

On Esek Harden's oaken floor,
With many an autumn threshing worn,
Lay the heaped ears of unhusked corn.

And thither came young men and maids,
Beneath a moon that, large and low,
Lit that sweet eve of long ago.

They took their places ; some by chance,
And others by a merry voice
Or sweet smile guided to their choice.

How pleasantly the rising moon,
Between the shadow of the mows,
Looked on them through the great elm-boughs !

On sturdy boyhood, sun-embrowned,
On girlhood with its solid curves
Of healthful strength and painless nerves !

And jests went round, and laughs that made
The house-dog answer with his howl,
And kept astir the barn-yard fowl ;

And quaint old songs their fathers sung
In Derby dales and Yorkshire moors,
Ere Norman William trod their shores ;

And tales, whose merry license shook
The fat sides of the Saxon thane,
Forgetful of the hovering Dane,—

Rude plays to Celt and Cimbri known,
The charms and riddles that beguiled
On Oxus' banks the young world's child,

That primal picture-speech wherein
Have youth and maid the story told,
So new in each, so dateless old,

Recalling pastoral Ruth in her
Who waited, blushing and demure,
The red-ear's kiss of forfeiture.



PART III.

THE WITCH'S DAUGHTER.

But still the sweetest voice was mute
That river-valley ever heard
From lips of maid or throat of bird ;

For Mabel Martin sat apart,
And let the hay-mow's shadow fall
Upon the loveliest face of all.

She sat apart, as one forbid,
Who knew that none would condescend
To own the Witch-wife's child a friend.

The seasons scarce had gone their round,
Since curious thousands thronged to see
Her mother at the gallows-tree ;

And mocked the prison-palsied limbs
That faltered on the fatal stairs,
And wan lip trembling with its prayers !

Few questioned of the sorrowing child,
Or, when they saw the mother die,
Dreamed of the daughter's agony.

They went up to their homes that day,
As men and Christians justified :
God willed it, and the wretch had died !

Dear God and Father of us all,
Forgive our faith in cruel lies,—
Forgive the blindness that denies !

Forgive thy creature when he takes,
For the all-perfect love thou art,
Some grim creation of his heart.

Cast down our idols, overturn
Our bloody altars ; let us see
Thyself in thy humanity !

Young Mabel from her mother's grave
Crept to her desolate hearth-stone,
And wrestled with her fate alone ;

With love, and anger, and despair,
The phantoms of disordered sense,
The awful doubts of Providence !

O, dreary broke the winter days,
And dreary fell the winter nights
When, one by one, the neighboring lights

Went out, and human sounds grew still,
And all the phantom-peopled dark
Closed round her hearth-fire's dying spark.

And summer days were sad and long,
And sad the uncompanioned eves,
And sadder sunset-tinted leaves,

And Indian Summer's airs of balm ;
She scarcely felt the soft caress,
The beauty died of loneliness !

The school-boys jeered her as they passed,
And, when she sought the house of prayer,
Her mother's curse pursued her there.

And still o'er many a neighboring door
She saw the horseshoe's curv'd charm,
To guard against her mother's harm :

That mother, poor and sick and lame,
Who daily, by the old arm-chair,
Folded her withered hands in prayer ;—

Who turned, in Salem's dreary jail,
Her worn old Bible o'er and o'er,
When her dim eyes could read no more !

Sore tried and pained, the poor girl kept
Her faith, and trusted that her way,
So dark, would somewhere meet the day.

And still her weary wheel went round
Day after day, with no relief :
Small leisure have the poor for grief.



PART IV.

THE CHAMPION.

So in the shadow Mabel sits ;
Untouched by mirth she sees and hears,
Her smile is sadder than her tears.

But cruel eyes have found her out,
And cruel lips repeat her name,
And taunt her with her mother's shame.

She answered not with railing words,
But drew her apron o'er her face,
And, sobbing, glided from the place.

And only pausing at the door,
Her sad eyes met the troubled gaze
Of one who, in her better days,

Had been her warm and steady friend,
Ere yet her mother's doom had made
Even Esek Harden half afraid.

He felt that mute appeal of tears,
And, starting, with an angry frown,
Hushed all the wicked murmurs down.

"Good neighbors mine," he sternly said,
"This passes harmless mirth or jest ;
I brook no insult to my guest.

"She is indeed her mother's child ;
But God's sweet pity ministers
Unto no whiter soul than hers.

"Let Goody Martin rest in peace ;
I never knew her harm a fly,
And witch or not, God knows—not I.

"I know who swore her life away ;
And as God lives, I'd not condemn
An Indian dog on word of them."

The broadest lands in all the town,
The skill to guide, the power to awe,
Were Harden's ; and his word was law.

None dared withstand him to his face,
But one sly maiden spake aside :
"The little witch is evil-eyed !

" Her mother only killed a cow,
Or witched a churn or dairy-pan ;
But she, forsooth, must charm a man !"



PART V.

IN THE SHADOW.

Poor Mabel, homeward turning, passed
The nameless terrors of the wood,
And saw, as if a ghost pursued,

Her shadow gliding in the moon ;
The soft breath of the west-wind gave
A chill as from her mother's grave.

How dreary seemed the silent house !
Wide in the moonbeam's ghastly glare
Its windows had a dead man's stare !

And, like a gaunt and spectral hand,
The tremulous shadow of a birch
Reached out and touched the door's low porch,

As if to lift its latch : hard by,
A sudden warning call she heard,
The night-cry of a boding bird.

She leaned against the door ; her face,
So fair, so young, so full of pain,
White in the moonlight's silver rain.

The river, on its pebbled rim,
Made music such as childhood knew ;
The door-yard tree was whispered through

By voices such as childhood's ear
Had heard in moonlight's long ago ;
And through the willow-boughs below

She saw the rippled waters shine ;
Beyond, in waves of shade and light,
The hills rolled off into the night.

She saw and heard, but over all
A sense of some transforming spell,
The shadow of her sick heart fell.

And still across the wooded space
The harvest lights of Harden shone,
And song and jest and laugh went on.

And he, so gentle, true, and strong,
Of men the bravest and the best,
Had he, too, scorned her with the rest ?

She strove to drown her sense of wrong,
And, in her old and simple way,
To teach her bitter heart to pray.

Poor child ! the prayer, begun in faith,
Grew to a low, despairing cry
Of utter misery : " Let me die !

" Oh ! take me from the scornful eyes,
And hide where the cruel speech
And mocking finger may not reach !

" I dare not breathe my mother's name :
A daughter's right I dare not crave
To weep above her unblest grave !

" Let me not live until my heart,
With few to pity, and with none
To love me, hardens into stone.

" O God ! have mercy on thy child,
Whose faith in thee grows weak and small,
And take me ere I lose it all !"

A shadow on the moonlight fell,
And murmuring wind and wave became
A voice whose burden was her name.

PART VI.

THE BETROTHAL.

Had then God heard her ? Had he sent
His angel down ? In flesh and blood,
Before her Esek Harden stood !

He laid his hand upon her arm :
“ Dear Mabel, this no more shall be ;
Who scoffs at you must scoff at me.

“ You know rough Esek Harden well ;
And if he seems no suitor gay,
And if his hair is touched with gray,

“ The maiden grown shall never find
His heart less warm than when she smiled,
Upon his knees, a little child ! ”

Her tears of grief were tears of joy,
As, folded in his strong embrace,
She looked in Esek Harden's face.

"O, truest friend of all !" she said,
"God bless you for your kindly thought,
And make me worthy of my lot !"

He led her forth, and, blent in one,
Beside their happy pathway ran
The shadows of the maid and man.

He led her through his dewy fields,
To where the swinging lanterns glowed,
And through the doors the huskers showed.

"Good friends and neighbors !" Esek said,
"I'm weary of this lonely life ;
In Mabel see my chosen wife !

"She greets you kindly, one and all ;
The past is past, and all offence
Falls harmless from her innocence.

"Henceforth she stands no more alone ;
You know what Esek Harden is ;—
He brooks no wrong to him or his.

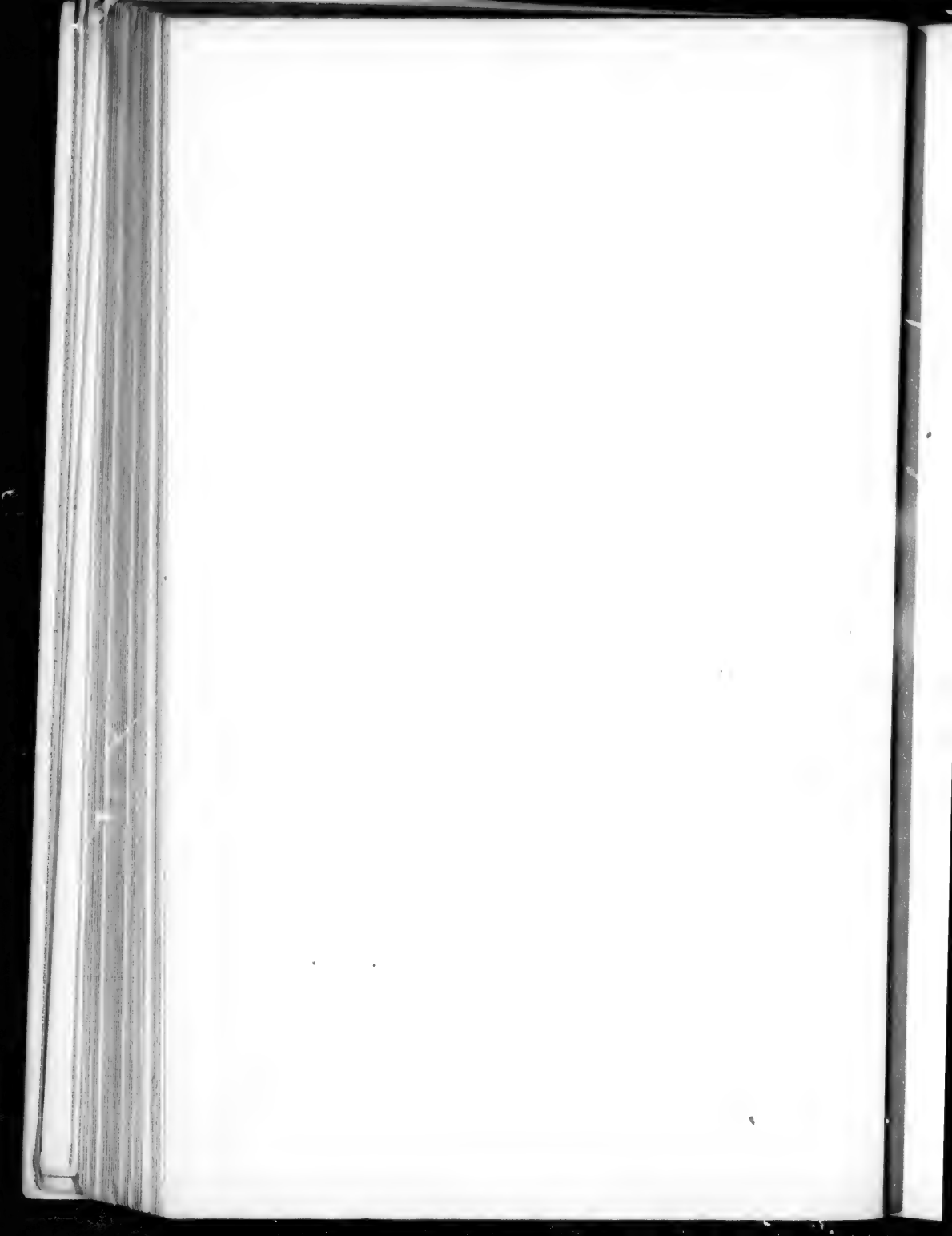
"Now let the merriest tales be told,
And let the sweetest songs be sung
That ever made the old heart young !

"For now the lost has found a home ;
And a lone heart shall brighter burn,
As all the household joys return !"

O, pleasantly the harvest-moon,
Between the shadow of the mows,
Looked on them through the great elm-boughs !

On Mabel's curls of golden hair,
On Esek's shaggy strength it fell ;
And the wind whispered, "It is well !"

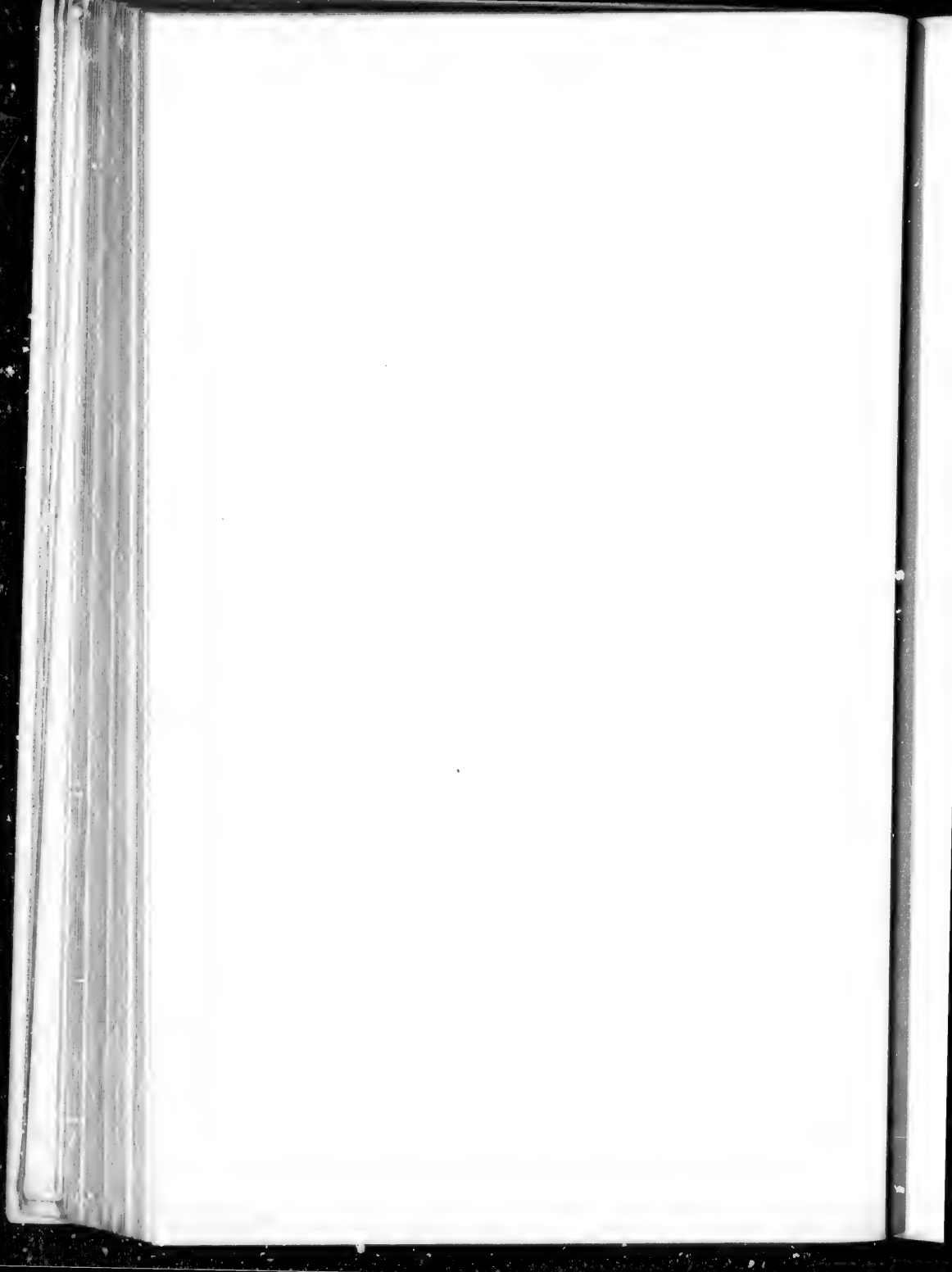




MASQUE OF PANDORA
AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.



THE MASQUE OF PANDORA.

I.

THE WORKSHOP OF HEPHÆSTUS.

HEPHÆSTUS, *standing before the statue of Pandora,*

Not fashioned out of gold, like Hera's throne,
Nor forged of iron like the thunderbolts
Of Zeus omnipotent, or other works
Wrought by my hands at Lemnos or Olympus,
But moulded in soft clay, that unresisting
Yields itself to the touch, this lovely form
Before me stands perfect in every part.
Not Aphrodite's self appeared more fair,
When first upwafted by caressing winds
She came to high Olympus, and the gods
Paid homage to her beauty. Thus her hair
Was cinctured ; thus her floating drapery
Was like a cloud about her, and her face
Was radiant with the sunshine and the sea.

THE VOICE OF ZEUS.

Is thy work done, Hephæstus ?

HEPHÆSTUS.

It is finished !

THE VOICE.

Not finished till I breathe the breath of life
Into her nostrils, and she moves and speaks.

HEPHÆSTUS.

Will she become immortal like ourselves ?

THE VOICE.

The form that thou hast fashioned out of clay
Is of the earth and mortal ; but the spirit,
The life, the exhalation of my breath,
Is of diviner essence and immortal.
The Gods shall shower on her their benefactions,
She shall possess all gifts ; the gift of song,
The gift of eloquence, the gift of beauty,
The fascination and the nameless charm
That shall lead all men captive.

HEPHÆSTUS.

Wherefore ? wherefore ?

A wind shakes the house

I hear the rushing of a mighty wind
Through all the halls and chambers of my house !
Her parted lips inhale it, and her bosom
Heaves with the inspiration. As a reed
Beside a river in the rippling current
Bends to and fro, she bows or lifts her head.
She gazes round about as if amazed ;
She is alive ; she breathes, but yet she speaks not !

Pandora descends from the pedestal.

CHORUS OF THE GRACES.

AGLAIA.

In the workshop of Hephæstus
What is this I see ?
Have the Gods to four increased us
Who were only three ?
Beautiful in form and feature,
Lovely as the day,
Can there be so fair a creature
Formed of common clay ?

THALIA,

O sweet, pale face ! O lovely eyes of azure,
Clear as the waters of a brook that run

Limpid and laughing in the summer sun !
O golden hair that like a miser's treasure
In its abundance overflows the measure !
O graceful form, that cloudlike floatest on
With the soft, undulating gait of one
Who moveth as if motion were a pleasure !
By what name shall I call thee ? Nymph or Muse,
Callirrhoe or Urania ? Some sweet name
Whose every syllable is a caress
Would best befit thee ; but I cannot choose,
Nor do I care to choose ; for still the same,
Nameless or named, will be thy loveliness.

EUPHROSYNÉ.

Dowered with all celestial gifts,
Skilled in every art
That ennobles and uplifts
And delights the heart,
Fair on earth shall be thy fame
As thy face is fair,
And Pandora be the name
Thou henceforth shall bear.

II.

OLYMPUS.

HERMES, *putting on his sandals.*

Much must he toil who serves the Immortal Gods,
And I, who am their herald, most of all.
No rest have I, nor respite. I no sooner
Unclasp the winged sandals from my feet,
Than I again must clasp them, and depart
Upon some foolish errand. But to-day
The errand is not foolish. Never yet
With greater joy did I obey the summons
That sends me earthward. I will fly so swiftly
That my caduceus in the whistling air
Shall make a sound like the Pandæan pipes,
Cheating the shepherds ; for to-day I go,
Commissioned by high-thundering Zeus, to lead
A maiden to Prometheus, in his tower,
And by my cunning arguments persuade him
To marry her. What mischief lies concealed
In this design I know not ; but I know

Who thinks of marrying hath already taken
One step upon the road to penitence.
Such embassies delight me. Forth I launch
On the sustaining air, nor fear to fall
Like Icarus, nor swerve aside like him
Who drove amiss Hyperion's fiery steeds.
I sink, I fly ! The yielding element
Folds itself round about me like an arm,
And holds me as a mother holds her child.

III.

TOWER OF PROMETHUS ON MOUNT
CAUCASUS.

PROMETHEUS.

I hear the trumpet of Alectryon
Proclaim the dawn. The stars begin to fade,
And all the heavens are full of prophecies
And evil auguries. Blood-red last night
I saw great Kronos rise ; the crescent moon
Sank through the mist, as if it were the scythe
His parricidal hand had flung far down
The western steeps. O ye Immortal Gods,
What evil are ye plotting and contriving ?

HERMES *and* PANDORA *at the threshold.*

PANDORA.

I cannot cross the threshold. An unseen
And icy hand repels me. These blank walls
Oppress me with their weight !

PROMETHEUS.

Powerful ye are,
But not omnipotent. Ye cannot fight
Against Necessity. The Fates control you,
As they do us, and so far we are equals !

PANDORA.

Motionless, passionless, companionless,
He sits there muttering in his beard. His voice
Is like a river flowing underground !

HERMES.

Prometheus, hail !

PROMETHEUS.

Who calls me ?

HERMES.

It is I.

Dost thou now know me ?

PROMETHEUS.

By thy winged cap
And winged heels I know thee. Thou art Hermes,
Captain of thieves ! Hast thou again been stealing

The heifers of Admetus in the sweet
Meadows of asphodel? or Hera's girdle?
Or the earth-shaking trident of Poseidon?

HERMES.

And thou, Prometheus: say, hast thou again
Been stealing fire from Helios' chariot-wheels
To light thy furnaces?

PROMETHEUS.

Why comest thou hither
So early in the dawn?

HERMES

The Immortal Gods
Know naught of late or early. Zeus himself
The omnipotent hath sent me.

PROMETHEUS.

For what purpose?

HERMES.

To bring this maiden to thee.

PROMETHEUS.

I mistrust
The Gods and all their gifts. If they have sent her
It is for no good purpose.

HERMES.

What disaster
Could she bring on thy house, who is a woman ?

PROMETHEUS.

The gods are not my friends, nor am I theirs.
Whatever comes from them, though in a shape
As beautiful as this, is evil only.
Who art thou ?

PANDORA.

One who, though to the unknown,
Yet knoweth thee.

PROMETHEUS.

How should'st thou know me, woman ?

PANDORA.

Who knoweth not Prometheus the humane ?

PROMETHEUS.

Prometheus the unfortunate ; to whom
Both Gods and men have shown themselves ungrateful,
When every spark was quenched on every hearth
Throughout the earth, I brought to man the fire
And all its ministrations. My reward
Hath been the rock and vulture.

HERMES.

But the Gods

At last relent and pardon.

PROMETHEUS.

They relent^d not ;

They pardon not ; they are implacable,

Revengeful, unforgiving !

HERMES.

As a pledge

Of reconciliation they have sent to thee

This divine being, to be thy companion,

And bring unto thy melancholy house

The sunshine and fragrance of her youth.

PROMETHEUS.

I need them not. I have within myself

All that my heart desires ; the ideal beauty

Which the creative faculty of mind

Fashions and follows in a thousand shapes

More lovely than the real. My own thoughts

Are my companions ; my designs and labors

And aspirations are my only friends.

HERMES.

Decide not rashly. The decision made
Can never be recalled. The Gods implore not,
Plead not, solicit not ; they only offer
Choice and occasion, which once being passed
Return no more. Dost thou accept the gift ?

PROMETHEUS.

No gift of theirs, in whatsoever shape
It comes to me, with whatsoever charm
To fascinate my sense, will I receive.
Leave me.

PANDORA.

Let us go hence. I will not stay.

HERMES.

We leave thee to thy vacant dreams, and all
The silence and the solitude of thought,
The endless bitterness of unbelief,
The loneliness of existence without love.

CHORUS OF THE FATES.

CLOTHO.

How the Titan, the defiant,
The self-centred, self-reliant,

Wrapped in visions and illusions,
Robs himself of life's best gifts !
Till by all the storm-winds shaken,
By the blast of fate o'ertaken,
Hopeless, helpless, and forsaken,
In the mists of his confusions
To the reefs of doom he drifts !

LACHESIS.

Sorely tried and sorely tempted,
From no agonies exempted,
In the penance of his trial,
And the discipline of pain ;
Often by illusions cheated,
Often baffled and defeated
In the tasks to be completed,
He, by toil and self-denial,
To the highest shall attain.

ATROPOS.

Tempt no more the noble schemer ;
Bear unto some idle dreamer
This new toy and fascination,
This new dalliance and delight !
To the garden where reposes

stay.

Epimetheus crowned with roses,
To the door that never closes
Upon pleasure and temptation,
Bring this vision of the night !

IV.

THE AIR.

HERMES, *returning to Olympus.*

As lowly as the tower that he inhabits,
As firm and cold as are the crags about him,
Prometheus stands. The thunderbolts of Zeus
Alone can move him ; but the tender heart
Of Epimetheus, burning at white heat,
Hammers and flames like all his brother's forges !
Now as an arrow from Hyperion's bow,
My errand done, I fly, I float, I soar
Into the air returning to Olympus.
O joy of motion ! O delight to cleave
The infinite realms of space, the liquid ether,
Through the warm sunshine and the cooling cloud
Myself as light as sunbeam or as cloud !
With one touch of my swift and winged feet,
I spurn the solid earth, and leave it rocking
As rocks the bough from which a bird takes wing.

V.

THE HOUSE OF EPIMETHEUS.

EPIMETHEUS.

BEAUTIFUL apparition ! go not hence !
Surely thou art a Goddess, for thy voice
Is a celestial melody, and thy form
Self-poised as if it floated on the air !

PANDORA.

No Goddess am I, nor of heavenly birth,
But a mere woman fashioned out of clay
And mortal as the rest.

EPIMETHEUS.

Thy face is fair ;
There is a wonder in thine azure eyes
That fascinates me. Thy whole presence seems
A soft desire, a breathing thought of love.
Say, would thy star like Merope's grow dim
If thou shouldst wed beneath thee ?

PANDORA.

Ask me not;

I cannot answer thee. I only know
The Gods have sent me hither.

EPIMETHEUS.

I believe,

And thus believing am most fortunate.
It was not Hermes led thee here, but Eros,
And swifter than his arrows were thine eyes
In wounding me. There was no moment's space
Between my seeing thee and loving thee.
O, what a tell-tale face thou hast ! Again
I see the wonder in thy tender eyes.

PANDORA.

They do but answer to the love in thine,
Yet secretly I wonder thou shouldst love me.
Thou knowest me not.

EPIMETHEUS.

Perhaps I know thee better
Than had I known thee longer. Yet it seems
That I have always known thee, and but now
Have found thee. Ah, I have been waiting long.

PANDORA.

How beautiful is this house ! The atmosphere
Breathes rest and comfort, and the many chambers
Seem full of welcomes.

EPIMETHEUS.

They not only seem,
But truly are. This dwelling and its master
Belong to thee.

PANDORA.

Here let me stay forever !
There is a spell upon me.

EPIMETHEUS.

Thou thyself
Art the enchantress, and I feel thy power
Envelop me, and wrap my soul and sense
In an Elysian dream.

PANDORA.

O, let me stay.
How beautiful are all things round about me,
Multiplied by the mirrors on the walls !
What treasures hast thou here ! Yon oaken chest,
Carven with figures and embossed with gold,
Is wonderful to look upon ! What choice
And precious things dost thou keep hidden in it ?

EPIMETHEUS..

I know not. 'Tis a mystery.

PANDORA.

Hast thou never

Lifted the lid?

EPIMETHEUS.

The oracle forbids.

Safely concealed there from all mortal eyes

Forever sleeps the secret of the Gods.

Seek not to know what they have hidden from thee,

Till they themselves reveal it.

PANDORA.

As thou wilt.

EPIMETHEUS.

Let us go forth from this mysterious place.

The garden walks are pleasant at this hour ;

The nightingales among the sheltering boughs

Of populous and many-nested trees

Shall teach me how to woe thee, and shall tell me

By what resistless charms or incantations

They won their mates.

PANDORA.

Thou dost not need a teacher.

They go out.

CHORUS OF THE EUMENIDES.

What the Immortals
Confide to thy keeping,
Tell unto no man
Waking or sleeping,
Closed be thy portals
To friend as to foeman.

Silence conceals it ;
The word that is spoken
Betrays and reveals it ;
By breath or by token
The charm may be broken.

With shafts of their splendors
The Gods unforgiving
Pursue the offenders,
The dead and the living !
Fortune forsakes them,
Nor earth shall abide them,
Nor Tartarus hide them ;
Swift wrath overtakes them !

With useless endeavor,
Forever, forever,
Is Sisyphus rolling

His stone up the mountain !
Immersed in the fountain,
Tantalus tastes not
The water that wastes not !
Through ages increasing
The pangs that afflict him,
With motion unceasing
The wheel of Ixion
Shall torture its victim !



VI.
IN THE GARDEN.

EPIMETHEUS.

YON snow-white cloud that sails sublime in ether
Is but the sovereign Zeus, who like a swan
Flies to fair-ankled Leda !

PANDORA.

Or perchance
Ixion's cloud, the shadowy shape of Hera,
That bore the Centaurs.

EPIMETHEUS.

The divine and human.

CHORUS OF BIRDS.

Gently swaying to and fro,
Rocked by all the winds that blow,
Bright with sunshine from above
Dark with shadow from below,
Beak to beak and breast to breast
In the cradle of their nest,
Lie the fledglings of our love.

ECHO.

Love ! love !

EPIMETHEUS.

Hark ! listen ! Hear how sweetly overhead
The feathered flute-players pipe their songs of love,
And echo answers, love and only love.

CHORUS OF BIRDS.

Every flutter of the wing,
Every note of song we sing,
Every murmur, every tone,
Is of love and love alone.

ECHO.

Love alone !

EPIMETHEUS.

Who would not love, if loving she might be
Changed like Callisto to a star in heaven ?

PANDORA.

Ah, who would love, if loving she might be
Like Semele consumed and burnt to ashes ?

EPIMETHEUS.

Whence knowest thou these stories ?

The Masque of Pandora.

PANDORA.

Hermes taught me ;
He told me all the history of the Gods.

CHORUS OF REEDS.

Evermore a sound shall be
In the reeds of Arcady,
Evermore a low lament
Of unrest and discontent,
As the story is retold
Of the nymph so coy and cold,
Who with frightened feet outran
The pursuing steps of Pan.

EPIMETHEUS.

The pipe of Pan out of these reeds is made,
And when he plays upon it to the shepherds
They pity him, so mournful is the sound.
Be thou not coy and cold as Syrinx was.

PANDORA.

Nor thou as Pan be rude and mannerless.

PROMETHEUS, *without.*

Ho ! Epimetheus !

EPIMETHEUS.

'Tis my brother's voice.

A sound unwelcome and inopportune
As was the braying of Silenus' ass,
Heard in Cybele's garden.

PANDORA.

Let me go.
I would not be found here. I would not see him.

[She escapes among the trees.]

CHORUS OF DRYADES.

Haste and hide thee,
Ere too late,
In these thickets intricate ;
Lest Prometheus
See and chide thee,
Lest some hurt
Or harm betide thee,
Haste and hide thee !

PROMETHEUS *entering*.

Who was it fled from here ? I saw a shape
Flitting among the trees.

EPIMETHEUS.

It was Pandora

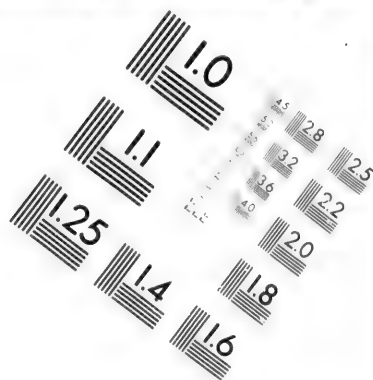
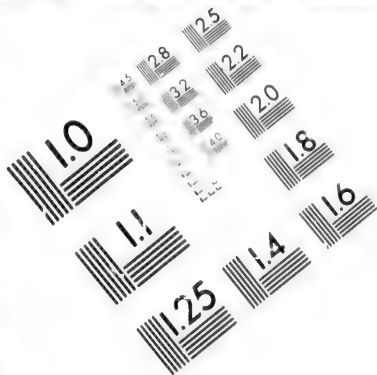
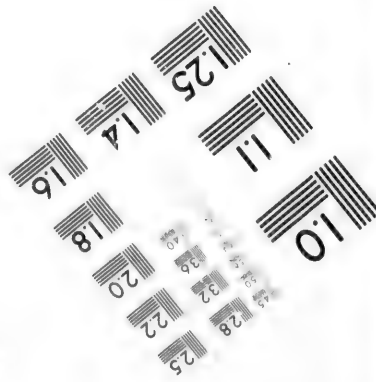
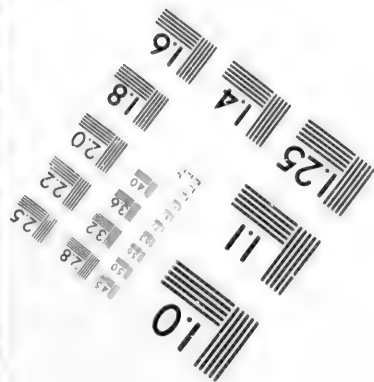
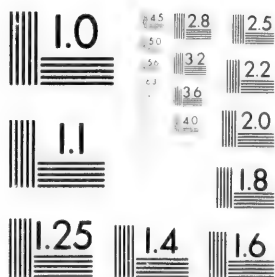


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PROMETHEUS.

O Epimetheus ! Is it then in vain
That I have warned thee ? Let me now implore.
Thou harborest in thine house a dangerous guest.

EPIMETHEUS.

Whom the Gods love they honour with such guests.

PROMETHEUS.

Whom the Gods would destroy they first make mad.

EPIMETHEUS.

Shall I refuse the gifts they send to me ?

PROMETHEUS.

Reject all gifts that come from higher powers.

EPIMETHEUS.

Such gifts as this are not to be rejected.

PROMETHEUS.

Make not thyself the slave of any woman.

EPIMETHEUS.

Make not thyself the judge of any man.

PROMETHEUS

I judge thee not ; for thou art more than man ;
Thou art decended from Titanic race,
And hast a Titan's strength, and faculties
That make thee godlike ; and thou sittest here
Like Heracles spinning Omphale's flax.
And beaten with her sandals.

EPIMETHEUS.

O my brother !

Thou drivest me to madness with thy taunts.

PROMETHEUS.

And me thou drivest to madness with thy follies.
Come with me to my tower on Caucasus ;
See there my forges in the roaring caverns,
Beneficent to man, and taste the joy
That springs from labor. Read with me the stars,
And learn the virtues that lie hidden in plants,
And all things that are useful.

EPIMETHEUS.

O my brother !

I am not as thou art. Thou dost inherit
Our father's strength, and I our mother's weakness :
The softness of the Oceanides,
The yielding nature that cannot resist.

PROMETHEUS.

Because thou wilt not.

EPIMETHEUS.

Nay ; because I cannot.

PROMETHEUS.

Assert thyself ; rise up to thy full height ;
Shake from thy soul these dreams effeminate,
These passions born of indolence and ease.
Resolve, and thou art free. But breathe the air
Of mountains, and their unapproachable summits
Will lift thee to the level of themselves.

EPIMETHEUS.

The roar of forests and of waterfalls,
The rushing of a mighty wind, with loud
And undistinguishable voices calling,
Are in my ear !

PROMETHEUS.

O, listen and obey.

EPIMETHEUS.

Thou ledest me as a child. I follow thee.

They go out.

CHORUS OF OREADES.

Centuries old are the mountains ;
Their foreheads wrinkled and rifted
Helios crowns by day,
Palid Selene by night ;
From their bosoms uptossed
The snows are driven and drifted,
Like Tithonus' beard
Streaming dishevelled and white.

Thunder and tempest of wind
Their trumpets blow in the vastness ;
Phantoms of mist and rain,
Cloud and the shadow of cloud,
Pass and repass by the gates
Of their inaccessible fastness ;
Ever unmoved they stand,
Solemn, eternal, and proud.

VOICES OF THE WATERS.

Flooded by rain and snow
In their inexhaustible sources,
Swollen by affluent streams
Hurrying onward and hurled
Headlong over the crags,
The impetuous water-courses,
Rush and roar and plunge

Down to the nethermost world.
Say, have the solid rocks
Into streams of silver been melted,
Flowing over the plains,
Spreading to lakes in the fields ?
Or have the mountains, the giants,
The ice-helmed, the forest-belted,
Scattered their arms abroad ;
Flung in the meadows their shields ?

VOICES OF THE WIND

High on their turretted cliffs
That bolts of thunder have shattered,
Storm-winds muster and blow
Trumpets of terrible breath ;
Then from the gateways rush,
And before them routed and scattered
Sullen the cloud-rack flies,
Pale with the pallor of death.

Onward the hurricane rides,
And flee for shelter the shepherds ;
White are the frightened leaves,
Harvests with terror are white ;
Panic seizes the herds.
And even the lions and leopards,
Prowling no longer for prey,
Crouch in their caverns with fright.

VOICES OF THE FOREST.

Guarding the mountains around
Majestic the forests are standing,
Bright are their crested helms,
Dark is their armor of leaves ;
Filled with the breath of freedom
Each bosom subsiding, expanding,
Now like the ocean sinks,
Now like the ocean upheaves.

Planted firm on the rock,
With foreheads firm and defiant,
Loud they shout to the winds,
Loud to the tempest they call ;
Naught but Olympian thunders,
That blasted Titan and Giant,
Them can uproot and overthrow,
Shaking the earth with their fall.

CHORUS OF OREADES.

These are the Voices Three
Of winds and forests and fountains
Voices of earth and air,
Murmur and rushing of streams,
Making together one sound,
The mysterious voice of the mountains,

Waking the sluggard that sleeps,
Waking the dreamer of dreams.

These are the Voices Three,
That speak of endless endeavor,
Speak of endurance and strength,
Triumph and fulness of fame,
Sounding about the world,
An inspiration forever,
Stirring the hearts of men,
Shaping their end and their aim.



VII.

THE HOUSE OF EPIMETHEUS.

PANDORA.

LEFT to myself I wander as I will,
And as my fancy leads me, through this house,
Nor could I ask a dwelling more complete
Were I indeed the Goddess that he deems me.
No mansion of Olympus, framed to be
The habitation of the Immortal Gods,
Can be more beautiful. And this is mine
And more than this, the love wherewith he crowns
me.

As if impelled by powers invisible
And irresistible, my steps return
Into this spacious hall. All corridors
And passages lead hither, and all doors
But open into it. Yon mysterious chest
Attracts and fascinates me. Would I knew
What there lies hidden ! But the oracle
Forbids. Ah me ! The secret then is safe.

So would it be if it were in my keeping.
A crowd of shadowy faces from the mirrors
That line these walls are watching me. I dare not
Lift up the lid. A hundred times the act
Would be repeated, and the secret seen
By twice a hundred incorporeal eyes.

She walks to the other side of the hall.

My feet are weary, wandering to and fro,
My eyes with seeing and my heart with waiting.
I will lie here and rest till he returns,
Who is my dawn, my day, my Helios.

Throws herself upon a couch and falls asleep.

ZEPHYRUS.

Come from thy caverns dark and deep,
O son of Erebus and Night ;
All sense of hearing and of sight
Enfold in the serene delight
And quietude of sleep !

Set all thy silent sentinels
To bar and guard the Ivory Gate,
And keep the evil dreams of fate
And falsehood and infernal hate
Imprisoned in their cells.

But open wide the gate of Horn,
Whence, beautiful as planets, rise
The dreams of truth, with starry eyes,
And all the wondrous prophecies
And visions of the morn.

CHORUS OF DREAMS FROM THE IVORY GATE.

Ye sentinels of sleep,
It is in vain ye keep
Your drowsy watch before the Ivory Gate ;
Though closed the portal seems,
The airy feet of dreams
Ye cannot thus in walls incarcerate.

We phantoms are and dreams
Born by Tartarean streams,
As ministers of the infernal powers ;
O son of Erebus
And Night, behold ! we thus
Elude your watchful wardens on the towers !

From gloomy Tartarus
The Fates have summoned us
To whisper in her ear, who lies asleep,
A tale to fan the fire
Of her insane desire
To know a secret that the Gods would keep.

This passion, in their ire,
The Gods themselves inspire,
To vex mankind with evils manifold,
So that disease and pain
O'er the whole earth may reign,
And nevermore return the Age of Gold.

PANDORA, *waking.*

A voice said in my sleep : " Do not delay :
Do not delay ; the golden moments fly !
The oracle hath forbidden ; yet not thee
Doth it forbid, but Epimetheus only !"
I am alone. These faces in the mirrors
Are but the shadows and phantoms of myself ;
They cannot help nor hinder. No one sees me,
Save the all-seeing Gods, who, knowing good
And knowing evil, have created me
Such as I am, and filled me with desire
Of knowing good and evil like themselves.

She approaches the chest.

I hesitate no longer. Weal or woe,
Or life or death, the moment shall decide.

She lifts the lid. A dense mist rises from the chest, and fills the room. Pandora falls senseless on the floor. Storm without.

CHORUS OF DREAMS FROM THE GATE OF HORN.

Yes, the moment shall decide !
It already hath decided ;
And the secret once confided
To the keeping of the Titan
Now is flying far and wide,
Whispered, told on every side,
To disquiet and to frighten.

Fever of the heart and brain,
Sorrow, pestilence, and pain,
Moans of anguish, maniac laughter,
All the evils that hereafter
Shall afflict and vex mankind,
All into the air have risen
From the chambers of their prison ;
Only Hope remains behind.



VIII.
IN THE GARDEN.

EPIMETHEUS.

The storm is past, but it hath left behind it
Ruin and desolation. All the walks
Are strewn with shattered boughs ; the birds are silent,
The flowers, downtrodden by the wind, lie dead ;
The swollen rivulet sobs with secret pain ;
The melancholy reeds whisper together
As if some dreadful deed had been committed
They dare not name, and all the air is heavy
With an unspoken sorrow ! Premonitions,
Foreshadowings of some terrible disaster
Oppress my heart. Ye Gods, avert the omen !

PANDORA, *coming from the house.*

O Epimetheus, I no longer dare
To lift mine eyes to thine, nor hear thy voice,
Being no longer worthy of thy love.

EPIMETHEUS.

What hast thou done ?

PANDORA.

Forgive me not, but kill me.

EPIMETHEUS.

What hast thou done ?

PANDORA.

I pray for death, not pardon.

EPIMETHEUS.

What hast thou done ?

PANDORA.

I dare not speak of it.

EPIMETHEUS.

Thy pallor and thy silence terrify me !

PANDORA.

I have brought wrath and ruin on thy house !
My heart hath braved the oracle that guarded
The fatal secret from us, and my hand
Lifted the lid of the mysterious chest !

The Masque of Pandora.

EPIMETHEUS.

'Then all is lost ! I am indeed undone.

PANDORA.

I pray for punishment, and not for pardon.

EPIMETHEUS.

Mine is the fault, not thine. On me shall fall
The vengeance of the Gods, for I betrayed
Their secret when, in evil hour, I said
It was a secret ; when, in evil hour,
I left thee here alone to this temptation.
Why did I leave thee ?

PANDORA.

Why didst thou return ?
Eternal absence would have been to me
The greatest punishment. To be left alone
And face to face with my own crime, had been
Just retribution. Upon me, ye Gods,
Let all your vengeance fall !

EPIMETHEUS.

On thee and me.
I do not love thee less for what is done,
And cannot be undone. Thy very weakness

Hath brought thee nearer to me, and henceforth
My love will have a sense of pity in it,
Making it less a worship than before.

PANDORA.

Pity me not ; pity is degradation.
Love me and kill me.

EPIMETHEUS.

Beautiful Pandora

Thou art a Goddess still !

PANDORA.

I am a woman ;

And the insurgent demon in my nature,
That made me brave the oracle, revolts
At pity and compassion. Let me die ;
What else remains for me ?

EPIMETHEUS.

Youth, hope, and love :

To build a new life on a ruined life,
To make the future fairer than the past,
And make the past appear a troubled dream.
Even now in passing through the garden walks
Upon the ground I saw a fallen nest

Ruined and full of rain ; and over me
Beheld the uncomplaining birds already
Busy in building a new habitation.

PANDORA.

Auspicious Omen !

EPIMETHEUS.

May the Eumenides
Put out their torches and behold us not,
And fling away their whips of scorpions
And touch us not.

PANDORA.

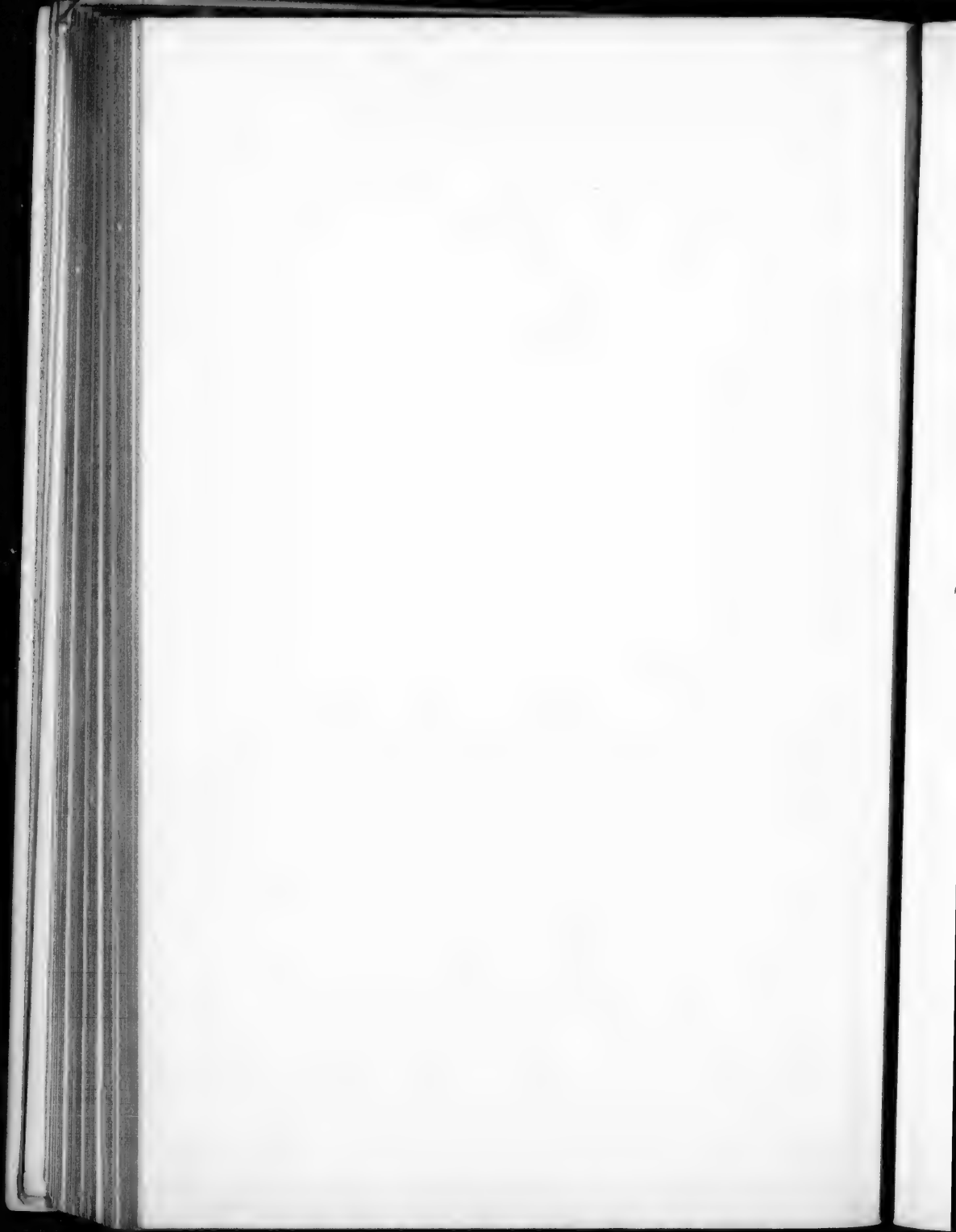
Me let them punish.
Only through punishment of our evil deeds,
Only through suffering, are we reconciled
To the immortal Gods and to ourselves.

CHORUS OF THE EUMENIDES.

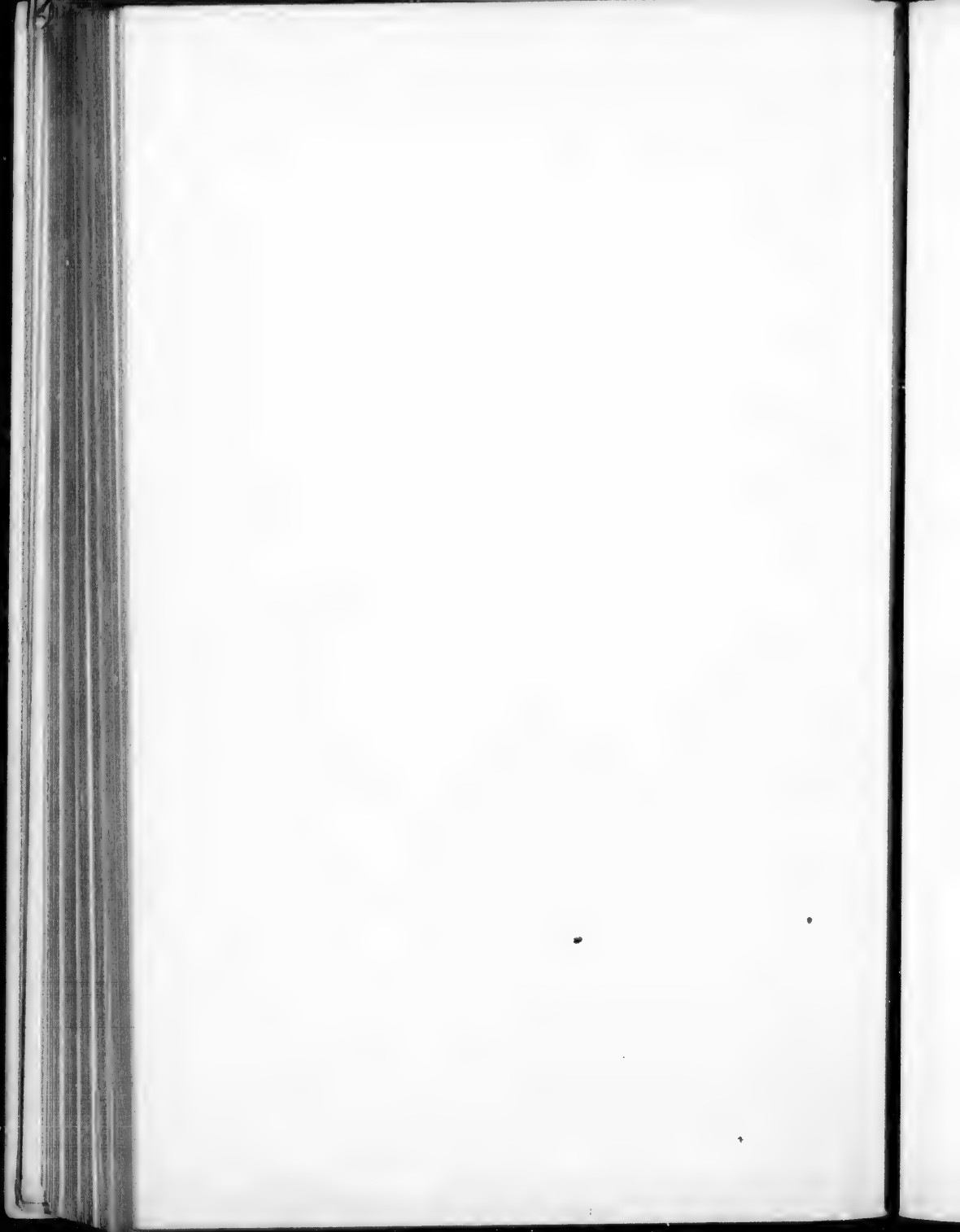
Never shall souls like these
Escape the Eumenides,
The daughters dark of Acheron and Night !
Unquenched our torches glare,
Our scourges in the air
Send forth prophetic sounds before they smite.

Never by lapse of time
The soul defaced by crime
Into its former self returns again ;
For every guilty deed
Holds in itself the seed
Of retribution and undying pain.

Never shall be the loss
Restored, till Helios
Hath purified them with his heavenly fires ;
Then what was lost is won,
And the new life begun,
Kindled with nobler passions and desires.



THE HANGING OF THE CRANE.



THE HANGING OF THE CRANE.



I.

THE lights are out, and gone are all the guests
That thronging came with merriment and jests
To celebrate the Hanging of the Crane
In the new house,—into the night are gone ;
But still the fire upon the hearth burns on,
And I alone remain.

O fortunate, O happy day,
When a new household finds its place
Among the myriad homes of earth,
Like a new star just sprung to birth,
And rolled on its harmonious way
Into the boundless realms of space !
So said the guests in speech and song,
As in the chimney, burning bright,
We hung the iron crane to-night,
And merry was the feast and long.

II.

And now I sit and muse on what may be,
And in my vision see, or seem to see,
Through floating vapors interfused with light,
Shapes indeterminate, that gleam and fade,
As shadows passing into deeper shade
Sink and elude the sight.

For two alone, there in the hall,
Is spread the table round and small ;
Upon the polished silver shine
The evening lamps, but, more divine,
The light of love shines over all ;
Of love, that says not mine and thine,
But ours, for ours is thine and mine.

They want no guests, to come between
Their tender glances like a screen,
And tell them tales of land and sea,
And whatsoever may betide
The great, forgotten world outside ;
They want no guests ; they needs must be
Each other's own best company.

III.

The picture fades ; as at a village fair
A showman's views, dissolving into air,
Again appear, transfigured on the screen,
So in my fancy this ; and now once more,
In part transfigured, through the open door
Appears the selfsame scene.

Seated, I see the two again,
But not alone ; they entertain
A little angel unware,
With face as round as is the moon ;
A royal guest with flaxen hair,
Who, throned upon his lofty chair,
Drums on the table with his spoon,
Then drops it careless on the floor,
To grasp at things unseen before.

Are these celestial manners ? these
The ways that win, the arts that please ?
Ah yes ; consider well the guest,
And whatsoe'er he does seems best ;

He ruleth by the right divine
Of helplessness, so lately born
In purple chambers of the morn,
As sovereign over thee and thine.
He speaketh not ; and yet there lies
A conversation in his eyes ;
The golden silence of the Greek,
The gravest wisdom of the wise,
Not spoken in language, but in looks
More legible than printed books,
As if he could but would not speak.
And now, O monarch absolute,
Thy power is put to proof ; for, lo !
Resistless, fathomless, and slow,
The nurse comes rustling like the sea,
And pushes back thy chair and thee,
And so good night to King Canute.



IV.

As one who walking in a forest sees
A lovely landscape through the parted trees,
Then sees it not, for boughs that intervene ;
Or as we see the moon sometimes revealed
Through drifting clouds, and then again concealed.
So I behold the scene.

There are two guests at table now ;
The king, deposed and older grown,
No longer occupies the throne,—
The crown is on his sister's brow :
A Princess from the Fairy Isles,
The very pattern girl of girls,
All covered and embowered in curls,
Rose-tinted from the Isle of Flowers,
And sailing with soft, silken sails
From far-off Dreamland into ours.
Above their bowls with rims of blue
Four azure eyes of deeper hue
Are looking, dreamy with delight ;

The Hanging of the Crane.

Limpid as planets that emerge
Above the ocean's rounded verge,
Soft-shining through the summer night.
Steadfast to y gaze, yet nothing see
Beyond the horizon of their bowls ;
Nor care they for the world that rolls
With all its freight of troubled souls
Into the days that are to be.



V.

Again the tossing boughs shut out the scene,
 Again the drifting vapors intervene,
 And the moon's pallid disk is hidden quite ;
 And now I see the table wider grown,
 As round a pebble into water thrown
 Dilates a ring of light.

I see the table wider grown,
 I see it garlanded with guests,
 As if fair Ariadne's Crown
 Out of the sky had fallen down ;
 Maidens within whose tender breasts
 A thousand restless hopes and fears,
 Forth reaching to the coming years,
 Flutter awhile, then quiet lie,
 Like timid birds that fain would fly,
 But do not dare to leave their nests ;—
 And youths, who in their strength elate
 Challenge the van and front of fate,
 Eager as champions to be

In the divine knight-errantry
Of youth, that travels sea and land
Seeking adventures, or pursues,
Through cities, and through solitudes
Frequented by the lyric Muse,
The phantom with the beckoning hand,
That still allures and still eludes.
O sweet illusions of the brain !
O sudden thrills of fire and frost !
The world is bright while ye remain,
And dark and dead when ye are lost !



VI.

The meadow-brook, that seemeth to stand still,
Quickens its current as it nears the mill ;
And so the stream of Time that lingereth
In level places, and so dull appears,
Runs with a swifter current as it nears
The gloomy mills of Death.

And now, like the magician's scroll,
That in the owner's keeping shrinks
With every wish he speaks or thinks,
Till the last wish consumes the whole,
The table dwindles, and again
I see the two alone remain.
The crown of stars is broken in parts ;
Its jewels, brighter than the day,
Have one by one been stolen away
To shine in other homes and hearts.
One is a wanderer now afar
In Ceylon or in Zanzibar,
Or sunny regions of Cathay ;
And one is in the boisterous camp

Mid clink of arms and horses' tramp,
And battle's terrible array.
I see the patient mother read,
With aching heart, of wrecks that float
Disabled on those seas remote,
Or of some great heroic deed
On battle fields, where thousands bleed
To lift one hero into fame.
Anxious she bends her graceful head
Above these chronicles of pain,
And trembles with a secret dread
Lest there among the drowned or slain
She find the one beloved name.



VII.

After a day of cloud and wind and rain
Sometimes the setting sun breaks out again,
And, touching all the darksome woods with light,
Smiles on the fields, until they laugh and sing,
Then like a ruby from the horizon's ring
Drops down into the night.

What see I now? The night is fair,
The storm of grief, the clouds of care,
The wind, the rain, have passed away ;
The lamps are lit, the fires burn bright,
The house is full of life and light :
It is the Golden Wedding day.
The guests come thronging in once more,
Quick footsteps sound along the floor,
The trooping children crowd the stair,
And in and out and everywhere
Flashes along the corridor
The sunshine of their golden hair.

On the round table in the hall
Another Ariadne's Crown

Out of the sky hath fallen down ;
More than one Monarch of the Moon
Is drumming with his silver spoon ;
The light of love shines over all.

O fortunate, O happy day !
The people sing, the people say.
The ancient bridegroom and the bride,
Smiling contended and serene,
Upon the blithe, bewildering scene
Behold, well-pleased, on every side
Their forms and features multiplied,
As the reflection of a light
Between two burnished mirrors gleams,
Or lamps upon a bridge at night
Stretch on and on before the sight,
Till the long vista endless seems.



MORITURI SALUTAMUS.

POEM

FOR THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CLASS OF
1825 IN BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

Tempora labuntur, tacitisque senescimus annis,
Et fugiunt freno non remorante dies.

OVID, *Fastorum*, Lib. vi.

MORITURI SALUTAMUS.

"O CÆSAR, we who are about to die
Salute you !" was the gladiators' cry
In the arena, standing face to face
With death and with the Roman populace.

O ye familiar scenes,—ye groves of pine,
That once were mine and are no longer mine,—
Thou river, widening through the meadows green
To the vast sea, so near and yet unseen,—
Ye halls, in whose seclusion and repose
Phantoms of fame, like exhalations, rose
And vanished,—we who are about to die
Salute you ; earth and air and sea and sky,
And the Imperial Sun that scatters down
His sovereign splendors upon grove and town.

Ye do not answer us ! ye do not hear !
We are forgotten ; and in your austere

And calm indifference, ye little care
Whether we come or go, or whence or where.
What passing generations fill these halls,
What passing voices echo from these walls,
Ye heed not ; we are only as the blast,
A moment heard, and then forever past.

Not so the teachers who in earlier days
Led our bewildered feet through learning's maze ;
They answer us—alas ! what have I said ?
What greetings come there from the voiceless dead ?
What salutation, welcome, or reply ?
What pressure from the hands that lifeless lie ?
They are no longer here ; they all are gone
Into the land of shadows,—all save one.
Honor and reverence, and the good repute
That follows faithful service as its fruit,
Be unto him, whom living we salute.

The great Italian poet, when he made
His dreadful journey to the realms of shade,
Met there the old instructor of his youth,
And cried in tones of pity and of ruth :
“ O, never from the memory of my heart
Your dear, paternal image shall depart,
Who while on earth, ere yet by death surprised,
Taught me how mortals are immortalized ;

How grateful am I for that patient care
All my life long my language shall declare."

To-day we make the poet's words our own,
And utter them in plaintive undertone ;
Nor to the living only be they said,
But to the other living called the dead,
Whose dear, paternal images appear
Not wrapped in gloom but robed in sunshine here ;
Whose simple lives, complete and without flaw,
Were part and parcel of great Nature's law ;
Who said not to their Lord, as if afraid,
" Here is thy talent in a napkin laid,"
But labored in their sphere, as men who live
In the delight that work alone can give.
Peace be to them ; eternal peace and rest,
And the fulfilment of the great behest :
" Ye have been faithful over a few things,
Over ten cities shall ye reign as kings."

And ye who filled the places we once filled,
And follow in the furrows that we tilled,
Young men, whose generous hearts are beating high,
We who are old, and are about to die,
Salute you ; hail you ; take your hands in ours,
And crown you with our welcome as with flowers !
How beautiful is youth ! how bright it gleams

With its illusions, aspirations, dreams !
Book of Beginnings, Story without End,
Each maid a heroine, and each man a friend !
Aladdin's Lamp, and Fortunatus' Purse,
That holds the treasures of the universe !
All possibilities are in its hands,
No danger daunts it, and no foe withstands ;
In its sublime audacity of faith,
" Be thou removed !" it to the mountain saith,
And with ambitious feet, secure and proud,
Ascends the ladder leaning on the cloud !

An ancient Priam at the Scæan gate
Sat on the walls of Troy in regal state
With the old men, too old and weak to fight,
Chirping like grasshoppers in their delight
To see the embattled hosts, with spear and shield,
Of Trojans and Achæians in the field ;
So from the snowy summits of our years
We see you in the plain, as each appears,
And question of you ; asking, " Who is he
That towers above the others ? Which may be
Atreides, Menelaus, Odysseus,
Ajax the great, or bold Idomeneus ?"

Let him not boast who puts his armor on
As he who puts it off, the battle done.

Study yourselves ; and most of all note well
Wherein kind Nature meant you to excel.
Not every blossom ripens into fruit ;
Minerva, the inventress of the flute,
Flung it aside, when she her face surveyed
Distorted in a fountain as she played ;
The unlucky Marsyas found it, and his fate
Was one to make the bravest hesitate.

Write on your doors the saying wise and old,
“ Be bold ! be bold ! ” and everywhere—“ Be bold ;
Be not too bold ! ” Yet better the excess
Than the defect ; better the more than less ;
Better like Hector in the field to die,
Than like a perfumed Paris turn and fly.

And now, my classmates ; ye remaining few
That number not the half of those we knew,
Ye, against whose familiar names not yet
The fatal asterisk of death is set,
Ye I salute ! The horologe of Time
Strikes the half-century with a solemn chime,
And summons us together once again,
The joy of meeting not unmixed with pain.

Where are the others ? Voices from the deep
Caverns of darkness answer me : “ They sleep ! ”

I name no names ; instinctively I feel
Each at some well-remembered grave will kneel,
And from the inscription wipe the weeds and moss,
For every heart best knoweth its own loss.
I see their scattered gravestones gleaming white
Through the pale dusk of the impending night ;
O'er all alike the impartial sunset throws
Its golden lilies mingled with the rose ;
We give to each a tender thought, and pass
Out of the graveyards with their tangled grass,
Unto these scenes frequented by our feet
When we were young, and life was fresh and sweet.

What shall I say to you ? What can I say
Better than silence is ? When I survey
This throng of faces turned to meet my own,
Friendly and fair, and yet to me unknown,
Transformed the very landscape seems to be ;
It is the same, yet not the same to me.
So many memories crowd upon my brain,
So many ghosts are in the wooded plain,
I fain would steal away, with noiseless tread,
A. from a house where some one lieth dead.
I cannot go ;—I pause ;—I hesitate ;
My feet reluctant linger at the gate ;
As one who struggles in a troubled dream
To speak and cannot, to myself I seem.

Vanish the dream ! Vanish the idle fears !
Vanish the rolling mists of fifty years !
Whatever time or space may intervene,
I will not be a stranger in this scene.
Here every doubt, all indecision ends ;
Hail, my companions, comrades, classmates, friends !

Ah me ! the fifty years since last we met
Seem to me fifty folios bound and set
By Time, the great transcriber, on his shelves,
Wherein are written the histories of ourselves.
What tragedies, what comedies, are there ;
What joy and grief, what rapture and despair !
What chronicles of triumph and defeat,
Of struggle, and temptation, and retreat !
What records of regrets, and doubts, and fears !
What pages blotted, blistered by our tears !
What lovely landscapes on the margin shine,
What sweet, angelic faces, what divine
And holy images of love and trust,
Undimmed by age, unsoiled by damp or dust !

Whose hand shall dare to open and explore
These volumes, closed and clasped for evermore ?
Not mine. With reverential feet I pass ;
I hear a voice that cries, " Alas ! alas !
Whatever hath been written shall remain,

Nor be erased nor written o'er again ;
The unwritten only still belongs to thee :
Take heed, and ponder well what that shall be."

As children frightened by a thunder-cloud
Are reassured if some one reads aloud
A tale of wonder, with enchantment fraught,
Or wild adventure, that diverts their thought,
Let me endeavor with a tale to chase
The gathering shadows of the time and place,
And banish what we all too deeply feel
Wholly to say, or wholly to conceal.

In mediæval Rome, I know not where,
There stood an image with its arm in air,
And on its lifted finger, shining clear,
A golden ring with the device, "Strike here !"
Greatly the people wondered, though none guessed
The meaning that these words but half expressed,
Until a learned clerk, who at noonday
With downcast eyes was passing on his way,
Paused, and observed the spot, and marked it well,
Whereon the shadow of the finger fell ;
And, coming back at midnight, delved, and found
A secret stairway leading under ground.
Down this he passed into a spacious hall,
Lit by a flaming jewel on the wall ;

And opposite in threatening attitude
With bow and shaft a brazen statue stood.
Upon its forehead, like a coronet,
Were these mysterious words of menace set :
" That which I am, I am ; my fatal aim
None can escape, not even yon luminous flame !"

Midway the hall was a fair table placed,
With cloth of gold, and golden cups enchased
With rubies, and the plates and knives were gold,
And gold the bread and viands manifold.
Around it, silent, motionless, and sad,
Were seated gallant knights in armor clad,
And ladies beautiful with plume and zone,
But they were stone, their hearts within were stone ;
And the vast hall was filled in every part
With silent crowds, stony in face and heart.

Long at the scene, bewildered and amazed
The trembling clerk in speechless wonder gazed ;
Then from the table, by his greed made bold,
He seized a goblet and a knife of gold,
And suddenly from their seats the guests upsprang,
The vaulted ceiling with loud clamors rang,
The archer sped his arrow, at their call,
Shattering the lambent jewel on the wall,

And all was dark around and overhead ;—
Stark on the floor the luckless clerk lay dead !

The writer of this legend then records
Its ghostly application in these words :
The image is the Adversary old,
Whose beckoning finger points to realms of gold ;
Our lusts and passions are the downward stair
That leads the soul from a diviner air ;
The archer, Death ; the flaming jewel, Life ;
Terrestrial goods, the goblet and the knife ;
The knights and ladies, all whose flesh and bone
By avarice have been hardened into stone ;
The clerk, the scholar whom the love of pelf
Tempt from his books and from his nobler self.

The scholar and the world ! The endless strife,
The discord in the harmonies of life !
The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,
And all the sweet serenity of books ;
The market-place, the eager love of gain,
Whose aim is vanity, and whose end is pain !

But why, you ask me, should this tale be told
To men grown old, or who are growing old ?
It is too late ! Ah, nothing is too late
Till the tired heart shall cease to palpitate.

Cato learned Greek at eighty ; Sophocles
Wrote his grand *Œdipus*, and Simonides
Bore of the prize of verse from his compeers,
When each had numbered more than fourscore years,
And Theophrastus, at fourscore and ten,
Had but begun his *Characters of Men*.
Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightingales,
At sixty wrote the *Canterbury tales* ;
Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,
Completed *Faust* when eighty years were past.
These are indeed exceptions ; but they show
How far the gulf-stream of our youth may flow
Into the arctic regions of our lives,
Where little else than life itself survives.

As the barometer foretells the storm
While still the skies are clear, the weather warm,
So something in us, as old age draws near,
Betrays the pressure of the atmosphere.
The nimble mercury, ere we are aware,
Descends the elastic ladder of the air ;
The tell-tale blood in artery and vein
Sinks from its higher levels in the brain ;
Whatever poet, orator, or sage
May say of it, old age is still old age.
It is the waning, not the crescent moon,
The dusk of evening, not the blaze of noon :

It is not strength, but weakness ; not desire,
But its surcease ; not the fierce heat of fire,
The burning and consuming element,
But that of ashes and of embers spent,
In which some living sparks we still discern,
Enough to warm, but not enough to burn.

What then? Shall we sit idly down and say
The night hath come ; it is no longer day?
The night hath not yet come ; we are not quite
Cut off from labor by the failing light ;
Something remains for us to do or dare ;
Even the oldest tree some fruit may bear ;
Not *Ædipus Coloneus*, or *Greek Ode*,
Or tales of pilgrims that one morning rode
Out of the gateway of the *Tabard Inn*,
But other something, would we but begin ;
For age is opportunity no less
Than youth itself, though in another dress,
And as the evening twilight fades away
The sky is filled with stars, invisible by day.



BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

FLIGHT THE FOURTH.



CHARLES SUMNER.

GARLANDS upon his grave,
And flowers upon his hearse,
And to the tender heart and brave
The tribute of this verse.

His was the troubled life,
The conflict and the pain,
The grief, the bitterness of strife,
The honor without stain.

Like Winkelried, he took
Into his manly breast
The sheaf of hostile spears, and broke
A path for the oppressed.

Then from the fatal field
Upon a nation's heart
Borne like a warrior on his shield !—
So should the brave depart.

Death takes us by surprise,
And stays our hurrying feet ;
The great design unfinished lies,
Our lives are incomplete.

But in the dark unknown
Perfect their circles seem,
Even as a bridge's arch of stone
Is rounded in the stream.

Alike are life and death,
When life in death survives,
And the uninterrupted breath
Inspires a thousand lives.

Were a star quenched on high,
For ages would its light,
Still travelling downward from the sky,
Shine on our mortal sight.

So when a great man dies,
For years beyond our ken,
The light he leaves behind him lies
Upon the paths of men.

TRAVELS BY THE FIRESIDE.

THE ceaseless rain is falling fast,
And yonder gilded vane,
Immovable for three days past,
Points to the misty main.

It drives me in upon myself
And to the fireside gleams,
To pleasant books that crowd my shelf,
And still more pleasant dreams.

I read whatever bards have sung
Of lands beyond the sea,
And the bright days when I was young
Come thronging back to me.

In fancy I can hear again
The Alpine torrent's roar,
The mule-bells on the hills of Spain,
The sea at Elsinore.

I see the convent's gleaming wall
Rise from its groves of pine,
And towers of old cathedrals tall,
And castles by the Rhine.

I journey on by park and spire,
Beneath centennial trees,
Through fields with poppies all on fire,
And gleams of distant seas.

I fear no more the dust and heat,
No more I feel fatigue,
While journeying with another's feet
O'er many a lengthened league.

Let others traverse sea and land,
And toil through various climes,
I turn the world round with my hand
Reading these poets' rhymes.

From them I learn whatever lies
Beneath each changing zone,
And see, when looking with their eyes,
Better than with mine own.

CADENABBIA.

LAKE OF COMO.

No sound of wheels or hoof-beat breaks
The silence of the summer day,
As by the loveliest of all lakes
I while the idle hours away.

I pace the leafy colonnade
Where level branches of the plane
Above me weave a roof of shade
Impervious to the sun and rain.

At times a sudden rush of air
Flutters the lazy leaves o'erhead
And gleams of sunshine toss and flare
Like torches down the path I tread.

By Somariva's garden gate
I make the marble stairs my seat,
And hear the water, as I wait,
Lapping the steps beneath my feet.

The undulation sinks and swells
Along the stony parapets,
And far away the floating bells
Tinkle upon the fisher's nets.

Silent and slow, by tower and town
The freighted barges come and go,
Their pendent shadows gliding down
By town and tower submerged below.

The hills sweep upward from the shore,
With villas scattered one by one
Upon their wooded spurs, and lower
Bellaggio blazing in the sun.

And dimly seen, a tangled mass
Of walls and woods, of light and shade,
Stands beckoning up the Stelvio Pass
Varenna with its white cascade.

I ask myself, Is this a dream ?
Will it all vanish into air ?
Is there a land of such supreme
And perfect beauty anywhere ?

Sweet vision ! Do not fade away ;
Linger until my heart shall take
Into itself the summer day,
And all the beauty of the lake.

Linger until upon my brain
Is stamped an image of the scene,
Then fade into the air again,
And be as if thou hadst not been.



MONTE CASSINO.

TERRA DI LAVORO.

BEAUTIFUL valley ! through whose verdant meads
Unheard the Garigliano glides along ;—
The Liris, nurse of rushes and of reeds,
The river taciturn of classic song.

The Land of Labor and the Land of Rest,
Where mediæval towns are white on all
The hillsides, and where every mountain's crest
Is an Etrurian or a Roman wall.

There is Alagna, where Pope Boniface
Was dragged with contumely from his throne ;
Sciarra Colonna, was that day's disgrace
The Pontiff's only, or in part thine own ?

There is Ceprano, where a renegade
Was each Apulian, as great Dante saith,
When Manfred by his men-at-arms betrayed
Spurred on to Benevento and to death.

There is Aquinum, the old Volscian town,
Where Juvenal was born, whose lurid light
Still hovers o'er his birthplace like the crown
Of splendor seen o'er cities in the night.

Doubled the splendor is, that in its streets
The Angelic Doctor as a school-boy played,
And dreamed perhaps the dreams, that he repeats
In ponderous folios for scholastics made.

And there, uplifted, like a passing cloud
That pauses on a mountain summit high,
Monte Cassino's convent rears its proud
And venerable walls against the sky.

Well I remember how on foot I climbed
The stony pathway leading to its gate ;
Above, the convent bells for vespers chimed,
Below, the darkening town grew desolate.

Well I remember the low arch and dark,
The courtyard with its well, the terrace wide,
From which far down the valley, like a park
Veiled in the evening mists, was dim descried.

The day was dying, and with feeble hands
Caressed the mountain tops ; the vales between
Darkened ; the river in the meadow-lands
Sheathed itself as a sword, and was not seen.

The silence of the place was like a sleep,
So full of rest it seemed ; each passing tread
Was a reverberation from the deep
Recesses of the ages that are dead.

For, more than thirteen centuries ago,
Benedict fleeing from the gates of Rome,
A youth disgusted with its vice and woe,
Sought in these mountain solitudes a home.

He founded here his Convent and his Rule
Of prayer and work, and counted work as prayer ;
The pen became a clarion, and his school
Flamed like a beacon in the midnight air.

What though Boccaccio, in his reckless way,
Mocking the lazy brotherhood, deploras
The illuminated manuscripts, that lay
Torn and neglected on the dusty floors ?

Boccaccio was a novelist, a child
Of fancy and of fiction at the best !
This the urbane librarian said, and smiled
Incredulous, as at some idle jest.

Upon such themes as these, with one young friar
I sat conversing late into the night,
Till in its cavernous chimney the wood-fire
Had burnt its heart out like an anchorite.

And then translated, in my convent cell,
Myself yet not myself, in dreams I lay ;
And, as a monk who hears the matin bell,
Started from sleep ; already it was day.

From the high window I beheld the scene
On which Saint Benedict so oft had gazed—,
The mountains and the valley in the sheen
Of the bright sun,—and stood as one amazed.

Grey mists were rolling, rising, vanishing ;
The woodlands glistened with their jewelled crowns ;
Far off the mellow bells began to ring
For matins in the half-awakened towns.

The conflict of the Present and the Past,
The ideal and the actual in our life,
As on a field of battle held me fast,
While this world and the next world were at strife.

For, as the valley from its sleep awoke,
I saw the iron horses of the steam
Toss to the morning air their plumes of smoke,
And woke as one awaketh from a dream.

AMALFI.

SWEET the memory is to me
Of a land beyond the sea,
Where the waves and mountains meet,
Where, amid her mulberry-trees
Sits Amalfi in the heat,
Bathing ever her white feet
In the tideless summer seas.

In the middle of the town,
From its fountains in the hills,
Tumbling through the narrow gorge,
The Canneto rushes down,
Turns the great wheels of the mills,
Lifts the hammers of the forge.

'Tis a stairway, not a street,
That ascends the deep ravine,
Where the torrent leaps between
Rocky walls that almost meet.
Toiling up from stair to stair
Peasant girls their burdens bear ;

Sunburnt daughters of the soil,
Stately figures tall and straight,
What inexorable fate
Dooms them to this life of toil ?

Lord of vineyards and of lands,
Far above the convent stands.
On its terraced walk aloof
Leans a monk with folded hands,
Placid, satisfied, serene,
Looking down upon the scene
Over wall and red-tiled roof ;
Wondering unto what good end
All this toil and traffic tend,
And why all men cannot be
Free from care and free from pain,
And the sordid love of gain,
And as indolent as he.

Where are now the freighted barks
From the marts of east and west ?
Where the knights in iron sarks
Journeying to the Holy Land,
Glove of steel upon the hand,
Cross of crimson on the breast ?
Where the pomp of camp and court ?
Where the pilgrims with their prayers ?

Where the merchants with their wares,
And their gallant brigantines
Sailing safely into port
Chased by corsair Algerines ?

Vanished like a fleet of cloud,
Like a passing trumpet-blast,
Are those splendors of the past,
And the commerce and the crowd !
Fathoms deep beneath the seas
Lie the ancient wharves and quays,
Swallowed by the engulfing waves ;
Silent streets and vacant halls,
Ruined roofs and towers and walls ;
Hidden from all mortal eyes
Deep the sunken city lies :
Even cities have their graves !

This is an enchanted land !
Round the headlands far away
Sweeps the blue Salernian bay
With its sickle of white sand :
Further still and furthest
On the dim discovered coast
Pæstum with its ruins lies,
And its roses all in bloom
Seem to tinge the fatal skies

Of that lonely land of doom.
On his terrace, high in air,
Nothing doth the good monk care
For such worldly themes as these.
• From the garden just below
Little puffs of perfume blow,
And a sound is in his ears
Of the murmur of the bees
In the shining chesnut-trees ;
Nothing else he heeds or hears.
All the landscape seems to swoon
In the happy afternoon ;
Slowly o'er his senses creep
The encroaching waves of sleep,
And he sinks as sank the town,
Unresisting, fathoms down,
Into caverns cool and deep !

Walled about with drifts of snow,
Hearing the fierce north-wind blow,
Seeing all the landscape white,
And the river cased in ice,
Comes this memory of delight,
Comes this vision unto me
Of a long-lost Paradise
In the land beyond the seas.

THE SERMON OF ST. FRANCIS.

Up soared the lark into the air,
A shaft of song, a winged prayer,
As if a soul released from pain,
Were flying back to heaven again.

St Francis heard ; it was to him
An emblem of the Seraphim ;
The upward motion of the fire,
The light, the heat, the heart's desire.

Around Assisi's convent gate
The birds, God's poor who cannot wait,
From moor and mere and darksome wood
Came flocking for their dole of food.

" O brother birds," St. Francis said,
" Ye come to me and ask for bread,
But not with bread alone to-day
Shall ye be fed and sent away.

"Ye shall be fed ye happy birds,
With manna of celestial words ;
Not mine, though mine they seem to be,
Not mine, though they be spoken through me.

"O, doubly are ye bound to praise
The great Creator in your lays ;
He giveth you your plumes of down,
Your crimson hoods, your cloaks of brown.

"He giveth you your wings to fly
And breathe a purer air on high,
And careth for you everywhere,
Who for yourselves so little care !"

With flutter of swift wings and songs
Together rose the feathered throngs,
And singing scattered far apart ;
Deep peace was in St. Francis' heart.

He knew not if the brotherhood
His homily had understood ;
He only knew that to one ear
The meaning of his words was clear.

THE END.

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